

# Scabies

(you say, skay-bees)

Scabies is caused by a tiny insect known as a mite which digs under the skin and lays eggs. Small blisters grow on the skin above each egg and the skin gets very itchy. The redness and small blisters look like a rash on the skin.

The scabies rash may start anywhere but it is usually between fingers, on wrists, inside the elbow, around the waist, on the bottom or private parts and under armpits.



## What to do

- Go to a doctor or call the school nurse or public health nurse to get an insecticide (you say, insect-a-side) cream to kill the mites. If your child is under 2 years old, they may need a different treatment so make sure you check with your doctor or nurse.
- Get enough cream to treat everyone in the household. Everyone should be treated even if they don't have a rash or itch.
- Apply cream to everyone in the family or household on the same day.
- The cream has to go all over the body, from head to toe - including the soles of feet.
- The cream must be left on overnight.
- On the same day as putting the cream on everyone you also need to wash all sheets, pillow cases, towels and clothes in hot water – or you need to put these things into a sealed plastic bag for 5 days to kill the mites. If you don't do these things, the mites will reinfect your family.
- Hang quilts and blankets outside for a day so the sun can kill any mites.
- Check other family members for scabies.

## Time off from kura or school

At least one day after treatment with the insecticide cream.

## What to do if scabies gets worse

- Once you have killed the scabies mites with the cream, the sores or the rash will stop growing but it will still be itchy for up to four weeks.
- The sores and rash can become infected.
- Go to the doctor if the sores or rash get redder, warm, start swelling or have pus. This could be cellulitis.

You may also need to repeat the treatment of the whole family with the insecticide cream.

If your child's scabies has turned to cellulitis, your child may need blood tests and antibiotics.



## How is scabies spread?

Skin contact with the infected person, and sharing sheets and clothes.



It is important to take the antibiotics every day until they are finished, even if the scabies has cleared up earlier. The antibiotics need to keep killing the infection in the body after the skin has healed.